

Is there a test available for flu? Yes. There are several different kinds of tests. Most involve having your throat or nose swabbed by your physician. The test is sent to a laboratory and should be done in the first 3 to 4 days of your illness. They are not 100 percent accurate and should not be done on *all* patients. They are useful when a doctor needs the results to help with diagnosis and treatment decisions.

Where are flu shots being given? Check your local newspapers for dates and times of health fairs; contact your healthcare insurance company for free or low cost vaccination schedule; contact your local hospitals, clinics, public health offices; your local physician; or the county or state health department public information offices for information.

How do we know when the flu season has begun? The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in Atlanta, Georgia maintains the U.S. Influenza Sentinel Physicians Surveillance Network. Each week approximately 650 doctors participate in this surveillance system, along with collaborating laboratories around the country to report positive influenza tests. Additionally, vital statistics offices around the country report influenza-related deaths on a weekly basis, and State and Territorial Epidemiologists report estimated levels of flu activity in their states each week.

Point of Contact:

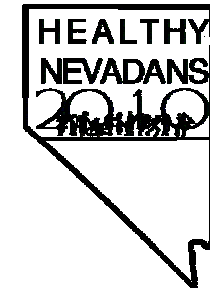
Washoe County District Health Department, (775) 328-2472
Clark County Health District, (702) 383-1351
Community Health Nurses (Statewide), Ask for
Name/Telephone Number for your County, (775) 684-4221



Influenza (Flu)

Do I need a flu shot?

NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION
Office of Public Information



Please visit our Website:
Health2k.state.nv.us
(775) 684-4200

Yes Si' Ja

The influenza (flu) vaccine is the most effective way to protect against influenza disease and its many severe complications. It is caused by a virus that spreads from infected persons to the nose or throat of others.

Who should get the flu shot? It is recommended that everyone 50 years of age or older; anyone who has a long-term health problem; anyone with a weakened immune system; anyone 6 months to 18 years of age on long-term aspirin treatment; healthcare workers; pregnant women who will be past the 3rd month of pregnancy during the flu season, should receive the flu shot. The annual flu shot is also encouraged for **anyone** who wants to reduce his or her chance of catching the flu!

Priority is given to **high-risk** individuals such as:

- Persons 65 years of age or older
- Persons 6 months to 64 years with certain chronic medical conditions
- Healthy children 6 thru 23 months
- Healthcare workers
- Household contacts of persons at increased risk for influenza-related complications including contacts with infants less than 6 months of age who are not eligible for the vaccine

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), is *encouraging* influenza vaccination for healthy children from 6 months to 23 months of age because children in this age group are at substantially increased risk for influenza-related hospitalizations.

The [Nevada State Immunization Program](#) will provide flu vaccine to providers for children ages 6 months through 18 years of age that are at high risk for complications. They include: children and teenagers age 6 months through 18

years who are receiving long term aspirin therapy and might be at risk for developing Reye Syndrome; children that have chronic disorders of the pulmonary or cardiovascular systems including asthma; children requiring regular medical follow-up or hospitalization during preceding year because of chronic metabolic diseases such as diabetes, renal dysfunction, hemoglobinopathies, or immunosuppression, HIV; and pregnant teenage women who will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during the flu season. For information, call (775) 684-5900.

When should I be vaccinated? The optimal time to receive vaccination is during October and November. Influenza, commonly referred to as the “Flu,” has historically peaked during late December through early March, especially in the past few seasons.

How long does it take for the vaccine to become effective?

Adults develop peak antibody protection against the flu in about 2 weeks after receiving the vaccination. Children younger than 9 years of age who are receiving the vaccine for the first time should receive the vaccine in October because they need a booster dose one month after the initial dose.

Can the shot give you the flu? Flu vaccines are made from killed influenza viruses—these viruses **cannot** give you the flu.

If I get the flu shot, can I still get the flu? This can happen, but the flu shot usually protects most people from the flu. However, the flu shot will not protect you from other viruses that can cause illnesses that sometimes feel like the flu.

The flu is just like a bad cold? No. The flu is far more dangerous than a bad cold. It is a disease of the lungs, and it can lead to pneumonia. Each year about 114,000 people in the United States are hospitalized and about 20,000 people die because of the flu. Most who die are over 65 years old; but small children less than 2 years old are as

likely as those over 65 to have to go to the hospital because of the flu.

Are side effects from the vaccine worse than the flu? The most frequent side effect you’re likely to get is a sore arm. The risk of a rare allergic reaction is far less than the risk of severe complications from flu.

What are the risks from the flu shot? A vaccine, like any medicine, is capable of causing serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of a vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small and very rare.

Can everyone take the flu shot? No. If you are allergic to eggs (used in making the vaccine); if you are very ill with a high fever; or if you’ve had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine in the past, you might not be able to get this protection. Consult your physician if in doubt.

Are the very old and sick the only individuals who need flu protection? Both adults and children who are in good health need a flu shot to stay healthy. Even if you aren’t at high risk of complications, you should get a flu shot to prevent the flu and to protect those who live with you, or with whom you may encounter during your daily activities.

What are some of the symptoms of flu? The onset of symptoms is sudden. You will have a sudden headache, dry cough, and you may have a runny nose and sore throat. Your muscles will ache, you will be very tired, and you can have a fever up to 104°F (40°C). The flu is a respiratory (breathing) illness. There is no such illness called “stomach flu.” Symptoms such as nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting are uncommon with the flu, *except in very young children*. Always check with your healthcare provider if you have questions about the diagnosis and treatment of these illnesses.

(Over)